

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the first paragraph on page 10, line 1, with the following amended paragraph:

Now referring to FIG. 2, the present invention also provides for a method for isolating ports on a layer 2 switch. The ports are configured as protected or non-protected ports by a user 40. A data packet is received by a layer 2 switch 42 which generates a forwarding map for the data packet 48. The destination address on the data packet is matched with a physical address or port number on the layer 2 switch by looking to an address table 46. Whether or not a match is found, ~~if the~~ if the ingress port is a protected port 50, the global mask will edit the forwarding map so that the data packet is sent to all other non-protected ports only and not any of the other protected ports 52. However, if the ingress port is a non-protected port 50, then all ports, whether non-protected or protected may receive the data packet 54. Once the data packet is sent to all necessary ports as directed by the forwarding map, the data packet may be sent to an uplink and onto a router or network. However, those skilled in the art will realize that the uplink and router/network are not necessary to carry out the present invention.